

University of Suffolk

Waterfront Building, Neptune Quay, Ipswich IP4 1QJ

Inspection dates

22 to 25 March 2022

Inspection judgements

Further education age-phase

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education and training	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to be a trainee at this ITE provider?

Trainees develop a secure understanding of how learning occurs. They apply their understanding effectively to planning, teaching and assessing their curriculum. Most trainees apply their understanding to the specific subjects they teach. They improve their teaching skills further through discussions with their peers and more-experienced colleagues at their settings.

Trainees are supported to make good progress by mentors who are, in most cases, highly skilled experts in teaching and learning. Trainees benefit greatly from their mentor's targeted advice, and from the useful communication between mentors and tutors in relation to their progress. Half of the trainees in the partner colleges, and all those in external settings, are mentored by subject specialists.

Trainees are prepared effectively for teaching learners with a range of barriers to learning. They know how to adapt their approaches to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They learn early in their programme strategies for managing learners' behaviour, which they adopt in their teaching practices.

Trainees gain good knowledge of the importance of safeguarding in further education and skills (FES) and understand fully their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

Information about this ITE provider

- There are 54 trainees. Fifteen are on a full-time programme of study and 39 are on a part-time programme.
- The provider provides training in further education and skills (FES).
- The university works in partnership with Suffolk New College and East Coast College, where the ITE teaching takes place.
- Placement settings are schools and colleges.
- Fifteen trainees are studying the level 5 certificate of education. Thirty-nine trainees are studying the level 6 post-graduate certificate of education.
- Thirty-three trainees are on placement in Suffolk New College; nine are on placement at East Coast College; three trainees are on placement in secondary schools and nine are placed in external FE colleges.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted by two HMI and one Ofsted Inspector.
- Inspectors met with Suffolk New College's director of quality, teacher development and student progress, deputy principal, vice principal and ITE Course Leader; East Coast College's assistant principal, vice principal, director of people and well-being and teaching and learning manager; University of Suffolk's academic registrar, head of academic and international partnerships and associate professor of education. Inspectors also met with the ITE tutors and teaching and learning specialists, and spoke to mentors in placements within and external to the college.
- Inspectors spoke to 13 trainees and six former trainees.
- Focused reviews were carried out in English; art and design, media and music; construction and engineering; animal management; and progress coaching.
- All placement visits were in Suffolk New College and East Coast College.

What does the ITE provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff from the colleges and the University work together effectively to inform the curriculum and to assure high quality. University leaders provide good support for curriculum development. They provide expert consultation and facilitate helpful practice-sharing events. Staff maintain their up-to-date knowledge of teaching and learning through professional development, networking and involvement in national projects. Through good coaching skills, they ensure that trainees acquire fundamental skills and mastery of their teaching practices over time. They use their skills also to enable trainees to develop effective reflective skills.

Leaders ensure that the programme meets the needs for teachers within FES. They understand the needs of their own workforce very well and the challenges they experience, such as in recruiting to niche specialist subjects. Recruitment to the ITE programme contributes directly to the university's plan for widening participation into higher education. Leaders across the partnership act promptly to improve trainees' experiences as a result of the feedback they receive from trainees.

Leaders fulfil their statutory duties with regard to safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and equalities training for trainees. Leaders enrol trainees through robust recruitment processes. Trainees are successful in gaining or maintaining employment when they complete their programme. Most trainees understand the process for gaining professional accreditation as a teacher and appreciate teaching as a profession.

Leaders and managers do not plan, manage or monitor effectively how well trainees apply their learning to their own subjects. As a result, there are a significant minority of trainees who lack skilled colleagues to help them apply their learning to teaching their specialist subjects. However, trainees develop secure knowledge of a range of pedagogical approaches and educational theory. They readily recall and apply their knowledge, resulting in their good teaching practices. Most trainees consider carefully different approaches that relate to their subject specialisms as a result of the discussions they hold with experienced peers at their settings. For example, those who teach creative subjects recognise the importance of learners' autonomy and experimentation, and those who teach level 1 programmes appreciate the importance of learned behaviours and role modelling.

Trainees develop secure knowledge of how learning occurs. They explain with confidence how different approaches to teaching affect learning and the factors that they consider when selecting an appropriate approach. They understand the relevance of practice and recall in how learners acquire knowledge. As a result, by the end of their programme, trainees plan their curriculums effectively, selecting appropriate methods to meet the needs of their learners.

Tutors use and model a variety of effective assessment activities. They help trainees understand how to improve academic standards in written work, and help trainees consider different approaches to teaching. Their assessment of trainees' written work is particularly rigorous. Trainees are supported by staff for pastoral, well-being and academic needs effectively. Their workloads are manageable and staff ensure that assessment is not laborious or burdensome for trainees.

Trainees learn to recognise signs of SEND, and other barriers to learning. Trainees attend workshops from expert colleagues to extend their understanding of meeting learners' specific needs. However, trainees do not demonstrate consistently how they apply their knowledge of supporting learners with SEND when planning lessons.

Leaders have not made sure that trainees have experience of a variety of settings. Too many trainees on the pre-service route are nearing the end of their ITE training having only experienced one setting. While leaders recognise the need for sourcing additional placements, too few trainees have secured these opportunities.

What does the ITE provider need to do to improve the FES phase?

- Leaders need to ensure that they plan for, and manage, trainees' subject-specific development, and access to subject-specialist support. They need to monitor how well trainees apply their learning to their specific subject areas so that all trainees understand the appropriate pedagogical approaches to use in their teaching.

- Leaders and tutors need to ensure that trainees consistently apply their theoretical knowledge of meeting the needs of learners with SEND when planning their lessons. They need to ensure that trainees take account of the needs of the learners in their classes through their design of the curriculums.
- Leaders need to ensure that trainees experience a range of settings during the programme. They must ensure that those on the pre-service route are placed in different settings as part of their programme, and that those on the in-service route gain experience of other FES settings.

ITE provider details

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This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) in accordance with the 'Initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook'.

This framework and handbook sets out the statutory basis and framework for initial teacher education (ITE) inspections in England from September 2020.

Type of ITE provider ITE in FE

Phases provided FES

Date of previous inspection 20–23 May 2013

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex: Provider settings, schools and colleges

Inspectors contacted trainees and staff at the following schools and colleges, as part of this inspection:

Name	URN	ITE phase(s)	Date joined	Current Ofsted grade
Suffolk New College	130820	FES	September 2007	Requires Improvement
East Coast College	130819	FES	February 2020	Good
Ashley School Academy Trust	137459	FES	September 2020	Outstanding
Cambridge Regional College	130610	FES	September 2021	Requires Improvement
Suffolk One Sixth Form College	142283	FES	September 2011	N/A
Clacton County High School	138084	FES	January 2022	Good

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